

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-10

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R 240702Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1195

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 6748

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJ: PAK-AFGHAN PROPAGANDA

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 6321; (B) ISLAMABAD 6443; (C) KABUL 4441

SUMMARY: AS SEEN FROM ISLAMABAD, THE PAK-AFGHAN AGREEMENT TO STOP AD HOMINEM PROPAGANDA ATTACKS IS WORKING QUITE WELL BUT IN A NARROW CONTEXT ONLY. AT LEAST ONE MFA OFFICIAL, HAS VOICED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN BROADENED TO INCLUDE DIMINUTION OF PROPAGANDA IN GENERAL. AFGHANS HAVE COMPLAINED ONLY ONCE ABOUT PAK VIOLATIONS OF AGREEMENT (BY VERNACULAR NEWSPAPER). GOP CLAIMS SOME AFGHAN PAPERS ARE AGAIN LAUNCHING PERSONAL ATTACKS ON PAK LEADERS FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AFGHANISTAN MADE AT NAP TRIALS. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT BOTH SIDES ARE TRYING TO KEEP TO AGREEMENT. WE HAVE HOPED, THOUGH, THAT THE GENERAL TENOR OF RADIO KABUL PROPAGANDA DURING PERIOD JUNE 16-30, HAS CHANGED LITTLE SINCE EARLY JUNE. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO MFA DIRECTOR (AFGHANISTAN) GHORI, PAK/ AFGHAN AGREEMENT TO END AD HOMINEM PROPAGANDA ATTACKS
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ON LEADERS IS WORKING TOLERABLY WELL BUT IN A LIMITED

CONTEXT ONLY. GHORI, IN DISCUSSING MATTER WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS JULY 22, VOICED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN BROADENED TO INCLUDE DIMINUTION OF PROPAGANDA IN GENERAL.

2. GHORI REVEALED THAT SINCE THE AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED, AFGHANS HAVE COMPLAINED ONLY ONCE ABOUT VIOLATIONS OF THE BAN. THIS CONCERNED A SERIES OF TWO OR THREE ARTICLES IN THE RAWALPINDI/LAHORE VERNACULAR NAWAI-WAQT, A MODERATE OPPOSITION DAILY, WHICH CONTAINED MATERIAL THE AFGHANS FOUND OFFENSIVE. THE GOP ADMONISHED THE EDITOR AND, DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS, HAS RECEIVED NO FURTHER COMPLAINTS FROM THE GOA.

3. SOME OF WHAT THE GOP REGARDS AS AFGHAN VIOLATIONS OF THE AGREEMENT, GHORI REMARKED, WERE PROBABLY SPARKED BY GOP TESTIMONY IN THE SUPREME COURT'S REVIEW OF THE BANNING OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY IN WHICH GOVERNMENT WITNESSES ALLEGED AFGHAN COMPLICITY IN SEDITIOUS NAP ACTIVITY. HE SINGLED OUT THE JALLALLABAD VERNACULAR PAPER NAGA MAR(SP?) AS MOST OFFENSIVE, BUT ALSO NAMED KABUL'S JAMURIAT AND HURRIAT AS VIOLATING AT LEAST THE SPIRIT OF THE JUNE 10 AGREEMENT. RADIO KABUL HAS ADHERED TO THE AGREEMENT, HE SAID.

4. ACCORDING TO GHORI, THE GOA HAS PROTESTED TO THE GOP CONCERNING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AFGHANISTAN IN THE TESTIMONY AGAINST THE NAP. THE GOP HAS REPLIED BY EXPLAINING THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST JUSTIFY ITS BAN ON THE NAP AND DOES NOT INTEND THE TESTIMONY AS A PROPAGANDA ATTACK ON AFGHANISTAN. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ABSENCE OF EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE TESTIMONY IS IN KEEPING WITH GOP DIRECTIVES TO THE PRESS TO REFRAIN FROM HOSTILE PROPAGANDA. (AS WELL AS RELATED TO CONTEMPT OF COURT RULES).

5. OUR OWN READING OF THE PROPAGANDA SCENE, ADMITTEDLY BASED ON A SMALL SLICE OF IT, IS THAT BOTH SIDES ARE INDEED TRYING TO UPHOLD THE LETTER OF THE AGREEMENT. WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING IN THE LOCAL PRESS SINCE JUNE 10 WHICH COULD BE CONTRUED AS A PERSONAL ATTACK ON SARDAR
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DAUD AND THE PRE-JUNE ARTICLES WHICH REGULARLY REPORTED ON ATROCITIES PERPETRATED AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN BY HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE STOPPED.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, OUR QUICK PERUSAL OF THE LATEST TRANCHE OF PAK MONITORING REPORTS ON RADIO KABUL (FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 16-30 AND BEFORE THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AFGHANISTAN MADE AT HEARING) REVEALS THAT THAT STATION,

AT LEAST OCCASIONALLY, IS SKIRTING CLOSE TO THE EDGE
OF THE AGREEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, A JUNE 28 PUSHTO BROAD-
CAST BRANDS BHUTTO ("THE MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE QUAID-
I-AWAM") AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BREAKUP OF PAKISTAN.
IN ADDITION (BUT AS WE UNDERSTAND IT NOT SUBJECT TO THE
AGREEMENT) EACH DAY'S BROADCAST CONDEMN THE "RULERS OF
PAKISTAN" FOR THEIR POLICY TOWARD "PUKHTOONISTAN". THE
CONDEMNATIONS ARE SPRINKLED LIBERALLY WITH SUCH PHRASES
AS: "CRUEL POLICY", "ATROCITIES", "LIES OF THE PAKISTAN
GOVERNMENT", "COLONIAL YOKE OF PAKISTAN", "ENSLAVED LAKHS
OF PATHANS" AND "SLAUGHTER OF THE PEOPLE OF PUKHTOONISTAN".
NOT SUBJECT TO THE AGREEMENT, PERHAPS, BUT CERTAINLY NOT
COUCHED AS TO SET A CLIMATE FOR WARMER RELATIONS.
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